

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 136

By Yarbro

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of United States Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court from 1993 to 2020; and

WHEREAS, remembered as "a jurist of historic stature" and "a tireless and resolute champion of justice" by Supreme Court Chief Justice John G. Roberts, Justice Ginsburg was the second woman and first Jewish woman appointed to the Supreme Court in U.S. history; and

WHEREAS, nominated to the Supreme Court by President Bill Clinton in 1993, Ruth Bader Ginsburg was noted for her pointed and powerful dissenting opinions and longevity on the court. Among Justice Ginsburg's notable rulings were *United States v. Virginia* (1996), in which she wrote the majority opinion stating that the Virginia Military Institute's all-male admissions policy was unconstitutional; *Bush v. Gore* (2000), in which she dissented from the court's decision to end the presidential election recount; and *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015), in which she made decisive arguments that led to the court's granting of marriage rights to same-sex couples; and

WHEREAS, the daughter of Nathan Bader and the former Celia Amster, Ruth Bader Ginsburg was born on March 15, 1933, and grew up in the Flatbush neighborhood of Brooklyn, New York; and

WHEREAS, Ruth Bader Ginsburg attended Cornell University on a scholarship; during her freshman year, she met Martin Ginsburg, a fellow student who would become the love of her life. The couple were married in 1954 and enjoyed a lifelong romantic and intellectual partnership that endured until Martin Ginsburg's death in 2010; and

WHEREAS, Justice Ginsburg graduated in a tie for first in her class at Columbia Law School; in 1972, she became the first woman to receive tenure on the faculty of Columbia Law School; and

WHEREAS, throughout her career, one of Ruth Bader Ginsburg's principal goals was the advancement of women's rights; to that end, she cofounded the first U.S. law journal to focus on women's rights as well as the Women's Rights Project of the American Civil Liberties Union; and

WHEREAS, as a litigator and director of the Women's Rights Project of the American Civil Liberties Union during the 1970s, Justice Ginsburg developed a successful strategy to persuade the all-male Supreme Court, one case at a time, to start recognizing the constitutional barrier against discrimination on the basis of sex; and

WHEREAS, Ruth Bader Ginsburg argued several cases before the Supreme Court that were to become legal landmarks in the advancement of women's rights. She presented six cases to the court between 1973 and 1978 and won five, including *Reed v. Reed* (1971), which ensured that the Fourteenth Amendment's guarantee of equal protection applied not only to racial discrimination but to sex discrimination as well; and

WHEREAS, before her appointment to the Supreme Court, Justice Ginsburg served as a federal judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals, to which she was nominated by President Jimmy Carter in 1980. While serving there, she gained a reputation as a moderate judge, which held true through the time of her confirmation to the Supreme Court thirteen years later; it was only in later years that she became known as a staunch member of the court's liberal wing; and

WHEREAS, Ruth Bader Ginsburg became a towering figure of the political left in later years, elevated to pop culture stardom and referred to as "The Notorious R.B.G.," a moniker lifted from rapper The Notorious B.I.G. She was beloved for her fiery devotion to human rights and was the subject of the documentary *RBG* and the feature film *On the Basis of Sex*; and

WHEREAS, Justice Ginsburg was also known for the wide variety of decorative collars worn with her judicial robes; she collected collars from around the world and had a favorite to

wear when issuing a majority opinion and another for a dissent, which made her views crystal clear before she ever uttered a word; and

WHEREAS, Ruth Bader Ginsburg is survived by her two children, Jane, a professor of intellectual property law at Columbia Law School, and James, a producer of classical music recordings in Chicago, and her four grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, Ruth Bader Ginsburg leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all her chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should remember the bountiful life of this exceptional jurist and pioneering advocate for women's rights; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we celebrate the life of Ruth Bader Ginsburg, even as we honor her memory and pay tribute to her distinguished service as a United States Supreme Court Justice.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Justice Ginsburg.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.